

4 talented young people share their Kickstart Scheme journey

This year we have been privileged to welcome 4 talented young people into the Government Legal Department (GLD) through the Kickstart Scheme. Hanif Hatab, Human Resources (HR), Rachel Fenner, Business Management, Nathan Lea, Business Management and Lauren Le, HR discuss the work that they have been undertaking during their time at GLD.

Hanif Hatab, HR Administrative Officer said:

I applied to the Kickstart Scheme as I had planned to explore other career options for myself outside of teaching.

My primary responsibility involves digitising sensitive confidential information and making sure it is stored digitally in the most secure way. Assisting with 2 different projects within diversity and inclusion inspired me to follow a similar route.

The experience is invaluable as being within a space of work where I feel comfortable has left me with certainty in what I want to pursue as a career. Now, I look towards achieving a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) qualification so I can gain the necessary skills to progress within the HR field and become an integral part of the HR team.

Rachel Fenner, Business Management Administrator at Department for Transport (DfT) Legal Advisors said:

My name is Rachel and I am an Executive Officer (E0). After graduating in summer 2021 with a degree in accounting and finance, I decided to apply to the Kickstart Scheme. This 6 month programme was a great opportunity to gain work experience in an office environment while figuring out where I wanted my career to go.

I joined the Business Management Team in the Department for Transport in December 2021, working as a personal assistant for 3 different deputy directors. I have been part of an amazing team, who have made me feel welcomed and supported from day one.

My role mainly consists of diary management for lawyers I support, but I have also managed the special bonuses awards and I'm also an IT focal point. This involves on-boarding, off-boarding and various other admin tasks.

I have completed and currently finishing 3 different courses – The Agile Project Management (Foundation and Practitioner course), IBM

SPSS Statistics and Crossing Thresholds which is a mentoring programme for women. My confidence has really grown since working here, especially with communicating in work environments and feeling comfortable in reaching out for help.

I have also gained clarity in the next steps in my career – I am starting a masters in psychology in September while working part time as an E0 and afterwards plan to work as a research assistant for a psychologist.

Nathan Lea, Business Management Administrator at Department for International Trade (DIT) Legal Advisors said:

I am Nathan Lea and I am 19 years old. I am currently working in DIT Legal Advisors Business Management Team as Office Support. I decided to apply for the Kickstart Scheme to get valuable work experience in a professional environment, with the allure of the Civil Service being one of the main reasons why I prioritised my application to GLD.

My role has involved project work for my head of business management and other deputy directors, mainly utilising Excel skills which I have cultivated during the time in my role. The benefits of this scheme have been innumerable to me.

Before this opportunity, I didn't know if the soft skills that I developed in school would translate over to work effectively, and this role has given me the confidence that I believe will allow me to progress in my career. The open, inclusive and welcoming environment has made me realise work is not as scary as I thought. I have been offered an E0 role in DIT Legal and hope to continue my career in the Civil Service.

Laura Le, HR Administrative Officer said:

My name is Laura and I graduated in 2020. During the pandemic, I was in a predicament as I could not decide if I should continue a law career. I considered HR as it involved the application of employment law – something I enjoyed studying at university.

I was drawn to the Kickstart Scheme at GLD as the position was in HR and within the legal industry, meaning I could experience and contrast the 2 fields. I have since taken on various responsibilities supporting Employee Services and the Government Legal Profession's (GLP) Diversity Summer Scheme and Buddy Scheme.

I am currently assisting and learning from other departments within HR. I have found it especially useful to network and have found everyone at GLD extremely welcoming, supportive, and inclusive. I

also have a lovely and supportive new mentor who stretches my personal and professional development.

My time at GLD has been immensely beneficial as I have acquired insight into HR and legal. I am now looking to secure a position within HR to develop expertise and complete a CIPD qualification.

Two million more women in work since 2010, as UK unemployment remains low

- New ONS data shows number of working women is now 2 million more than in 2010
- Women in high-skilled jobs is up 38.5% since 2010, with proportion of women progressing into top management roles growing by almost 25% over last 12 years
- The results come as the UK sees another unemployment rate of 3.8% – below pre-pandemic levels

The number of working women has now reached 15.7 million – a rise of 2 million since 2010 with more women progressing into senior, higher-skilled jobs.

The figures show the portion of women becoming managers, directors and senior officials has climbed almost 25% since 2010, rising by nearly a quarter of a million. Women in professional occupations is also up 40% since 2010 and almost 40% more have moved into associate professional and technical jobs like science, technology, engineering and maths.

Young women are currently one of the fastest growing working group, with 7.7% more women aged 16-24 moving into employment across the year. New OECD data also shows the UK has the second highest female and youth employment rates among the G7.

DWP Minister, Julie Marson MP said:

It's fantastic news that today we've got 2 million more women in work than in 2010, and the latest OECD data shows we have the second highest level of women in work in the G7.

As we grow the economy, it's vital we make sure everyone can find a job that's right for them – and importantly that they can progress in work.

That's why we're keeping up our support to get people at any age or career stage into work, including a new multi-million pound offer

to help the over 50s get into, and remain in employment.

To help working mothers, the government [recently announced](#) a new package of measures to increase childcare support for parents amid rising costs. This included a call for more parents to take up support through Universal Credit, which allows families to reclaim up to 85% of their childcare costs, worth up to £1,108 per month.

The government knows that work is the best route out of poverty, and people can be £6,000 better off in work than out of work on benefits. DWP work coaches are supporting jobseekers, at any age or stage, get into secure and long-term employment, because as well as financial benefits a job also brings social and wellbeing benefits.

DWP is also investing a further £22 million in its 50PLUS Champions jobcentre support package. The [recent announcement](#) means more over 50s jobseekers will receive more one-to-one employment support, so they can continue to reap the benefits of their invaluable work experience and boost earnings ahead of retirement.

The jobs figures out today come as the DWP's [Way to Work jobs drive](#) reached its target of helping half a million people on benefits find work in five months and as the department sets out to build on its in-work progression agenda – helping working people receiving Universal Credit to progress in their jobs and earn more money for their families.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0115 965 8781

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[HS2 bidder merger raises competition concerns](#)

Press release

The CMA has found that a merger between 2 businesses currently bidding for the installation of overhead power cables for HS2 could raise competition concerns.



Image credit: iStock

Bouygues and Equans (part of Engie Group) are both large and well-established players within the railway supply chain in Europe. Bouygues agreed to buy Equans in a £6 billion deal announced in November 2021.

In the UK, Bouygues and Equans are close competitors in the supply of catenary systems (the overhead power cables used to supply electricity to trains) for high-speed railways. Both businesses are currently competing to supply High Speed 2 (HS2) – the only contract in recent years for the supply of catenary systems to high-speed railways in the UK.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that there would be a sufficient number of credible competitors for any future contracts for the installation and maintenance of high-speed catenary systems in the UK. But as the current HS2 tender is at an advanced stage, and the merging businesses are 2 of a smaller number of bidders in the final stages competing for the contract, the CMA is concerned that these 2 bids coming under the control of the merged business could make the remainder of the tender process less competitive.

The CMA is concerned that this reduction in competition could result in a higher-cost final contract, which would have an adverse knock-on effect on taxpayers.

Colin Raftery, Senior Director at the CMA, said:

Competitive tenders help make sure that taxpayers get the best possible deal when large public works, like HS2, are undertaken.

The HS2 tender for overhead catenary systems is at an advanced stage, but the remaining bidders are continuing to compete on the final aspects of the contract. It's important to ensure that this process isn't undermined, as this could result in unnecessary additional costs, ultimately leaving taxpayers worse off.

The firms now have 5 working days to submit proposals to address the CMA's competition concerns. The CMA then has a further 5 working days to consider whether to accept any offer instead of referring the case for an in-depth

Phase 2 investigation.

For more information, visit the [Bouygues / Equans merger inquiry page](#).

1. For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.
2. Under the Enterprise Act 2002 the CMA has a duty to make a reference to Phase 2 if the CMA believes that it is or may be the case that a relevant merger situation has been created, or arrangements are in progress or contemplation which, if carried into effect, will result in the creation of a relevant merger situation; and the creation of that situation has resulted, or may be expected to result, in a substantial lessening of competition within any market or markets in the United Kingdom for goods or services.
3. The CMA found that the merger gives rise to a realistic prospect of a substantial lessening of competition in the supply of high-speed overhead catenary systems in the UK.
4. The transaction is also subject to review by the European Commission, which is also scheduled to issue a decision on its Phase 1 investigation by 19 July.
5. Visit the [High Speed 2 website](#) for more information on the tender for the supply of catenary systems for HS2.

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[Innovation heavyweights appointed to lead new Advanced Research and Invention Agency](#)

- Ilan Gur, founder and former CEO of innovation non-profit Activate, appointed to head up the Advanced Research and Invention Agency – the UK's new, independent science funding body
- under Dr Gur's leadership as its first CEO, ARIA will have the freedom to identify and fund transformational science and technology at speed with minimal bureaucracy
- Matt Clifford MBE, co-founder and CEO of Entrepreneur First, appointed as ARIA's first Chairman

The Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng has today appointed Ilan Gur as Chief Executive of the UK's new Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA), to set the agency's agenda, direct its initial funding of high-risk programmes, build an exceptional team of Programme Managers and engage the domestic and international R&D sector.

Today also marks the appointment of talent investor and entrepreneur Matt Clifford as ARIA's Chairman, who will support the work of the CEO as he takes post on 15 August, acting as the steward for ARIA's effective governance.

ARIA will enable exceptional scientists and researchers to identify and fund transformational research that leads to new technologies, discoveries, products and services – helping to maintain the UK's position as a global science superpower and attracting top talent to our shores to grow the economy, boost prosperity and develop the breakthroughs of the future.

Dr Gur built his career managing cutting-edge research and innovation for the benefit of society, predominantly in his role as founder and CEO of non-profit organisation Activate, a US-based organisation which empowers scientists and engineers to bring ground-breaking research to market. Activate has supported 142 fellows and catalysed the creation of over 100 science-based start-ups under Mr Gur's expert leadership.

Dr Gur has also established 2 science-based start-ups, and served in the first generation of Programme Directors at ARPA-E, the US Department of Energy's agency for funding breakthrough innovations in energy technology.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

The appointment of Ilan Gur as ARIA's first CEO is a huge victory for the future of the agency, and for the UK. He has a distinguished track record in translating exceptional talent and ideas into commercial success, and his leadership will ensure the funding of high-risk programmes that will continue to push the boundaries of science and technology.

Under Dr Gur's leadership and with the support of the brilliant Matt Clifford, ARIA will ensure the benefits of research and development will be felt in our society and economy over the course of generations.

By stripping back unnecessary red tape and putting power in the hands of our innovators, the agency has the freedom to drive forward the technologies of tomorrow.

ARIA has taken inspiration from the successful US-based Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), which was instrumental in creating transformational technologies such as the internet and GPS, changing the way people live and work, while increasing productivity and economic growth.

More recently, ARPA's successor, DARPA, was a vital pre-pandemic funder of mRNA vaccines and antibody therapies, leading to critical COVID-19 therapies.

Incoming ARIA CEO, Ilan Gur said:

I believe that ARIA can deliver the promise of a better future, not

just for citizens of the United Kingdom but for the world.

The opportunity to serve as ARIA's founding CEO is a great honour and a great responsibility that I will work tirelessly to fulfil.

The government set out plans to create ARIA in February 2021 to fund high-risk, high-reward scientific research, and maintain the UK's position as a science superpower, with the ARIA Act receiving Royal Assent in February 2022. The Agency is expected to be established later this year.

To support the incoming CEO and Chairman, recruitment campaigns have also been launched today to find ARIA's Non-Executive Directors and the agency's first Chief Financial Officer.

Incoming Chairman of ARIA, Matt Clifford MBE, said:

ARIA has the potential to create a new model for accelerating the scientific and technological breakthroughs that the world needs.

I am honoured to have the opportunity to work with Ilan Gur to guide ARIA through its formative years and ensure its success.

The government has committed to increase public investment in R&D to £20 billion in 2024-2025, with total R&D spending reaching 2.4% of GDP by 2027, and ARIA will be an integral and invaluable addition to the UK's flourishing R&D ecosystem.

It will operate with the agility to fund transformational science, with the pace, freedom and flexibility of a tech start-up and the facilities of the established UK science infrastructure, avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy, and experimenting with different funding models.

Chief Executive of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser said:

The arrival of ARIA will further strengthen the UK research and innovation system. I am excited about the appointment of Ilan Gur and Matt Clifford as the founding CEO and Chair. They will provide the expertise and energy required to make it a success and I am very much looking forward to working with them.

ARIA will play a key role in diversifying the ways in which we back talented people and teams working on truly transformative ideas, wherever and whoever they are. Together we can build the dynamic, creative research and innovation system essential for the UK's prosperity.

- Ilan Gur obtained a PhD in Materials Science and Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley. He is a Schmidt Futures Innovation

Fellow, an advisor to the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation in support of the Moore Inventor Fellowship, and a judge for MIT Technology Review's TR35 award

- Matt Clifford MBE is co-founder and CEO of Entrepreneur First, an international investor in technical talent that has helped to build technological companies worth over \$10 billion. Clifford is also co-founder and non-executive director of Code First Girls, has served as a Council Member at Innovate UK, and is a Trustee of the Kennedy Memorial Trust. Before starting Entrepreneur First, Matt worked at McKinsey & Co and earned degrees from the University of Cambridge and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Government seeks views to improve lives of people with Down's syndrome

- People with Down's syndrome, families, professionals and charities are invited to share their experiences and expertise which will be used to shape new guidance
- Life expectancy has increased from 13 to almost 60 within a generation and services are needed to support the more than 40,000 people with Down's syndrome and their families

People with Down's syndrome, their families, professionals and charities are being invited to answer the government's call for evidence to shape new guidance for authorities to follow.

The guidance will help to ensure those with Down's syndrome receive the care and support they need to live longer, happier and healthier lives.

People with Down's syndrome have seen their life expectancy increase from around 13 to almost 60 within a generation so tailored support is required to meet additional health, education, care and housing needs.

Minister for Care and Mental Health Gillian Keegan said:

I know with the right support people with Down's syndrome can live full and independent lives.

We need to work together to help organisations better understand how to provide appropriate education, housing and the best possible health and social care support.

It is time for families to stop struggling alone and this guidance will help public authorities to put the right support in place.

The Down Syndrome Act, supported by the government and Dr Liam Fox MP, requires the Health and Social Care Secretary to issue guidance on how to meet the needs of people with Down's syndrome.

Authorities including the NHS, health commissioners and Integrated Care Boards – who will also appoint a named lead to oversee implementation – will then be required to follow the guidance.

People with Down's syndrome are at an increased risk of certain medical conditions – such as congenital heart disease, early onset dementia or hearing and visual impairment. Education and early years support may not always meet needs and can be difficult to access and there is not enough suitable supported housing.

The new guidance will help ensure improved access to the support that people with Down's syndrome need, which can include speech and language therapy, additional educational, housing and care support.

Although legal duties and care frameworks already exist it can be difficult to access services. This guidance will identify what is needed and how it should be delivered.

The call for evidence will also investigate what support is available and what barriers remain with regards to accessing healthcare. In adult social care, questions will focus on the levels of support available to ensure personal care, community engagement and relationships can be maintained.

In housing everyone has the right to try and live as independently as they wish in their own home so questions will focus on what is needed to make this possible.

In education the call for evidence will link to the wider Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision reforms.

Minister for School Standards, Will Quince said:

It's crucial that our work to improve people's opportunities in this country is based on people's experiences.

I know through my conversations with parents, professionals and children with special educational needs and disabilities, including those with Down's syndrome, how important guidance can be in helping services to improve people's lives.

I encourage anyone with an interest to have their say in this call for evidence, to build on our work improving the SEND system for children and families across the country.

The call for evidence is focused on Down's syndrome but will also test whether the guidance can benefit other people too. Those with a different genetic condition, as well as their families and carers, are invited to

contribute.

This call for evidence will run for a period of 16 weeks and is open to everyone.